

# MATWATCH

213 Pine Hills Ave. Auburn Al 36830

AUGUST 14-20

VOL. 2, NO. 8

## ENGLAND SWINGS LIKE LIKE A WRESTLING RING DO

CAMBRIDGE, England - They say if you stay here long enough, you never want to come home. Wanna bet? How could I stand every American wrestling telecast being four to six months late?



## Steve Beverly

Anyway, with Rebecca and I learning how to drive on the "wrong" side of the road and with me wondering if the story of the year has broken (like George South winning an NWA match), let me share a few random thoughts:

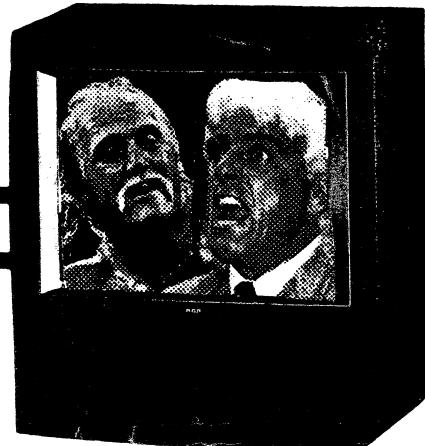
With Vince "They're Not a Competitor" McMahon booking the Philly Spectrum night before the next NWA PPV in Philly, why not move the pay show to St. Louis or Atlanta.....

Has there been a more durable performer over the last 15 years than Bill Eadie?....The government ought to outlaw recap shows for TV wrestling....Why hasn't a bigger indie promotion contacted Len Denton to book?....Dan Kroffat's Japan performances have to put him in wrestling's elite for 1989.

Has NWA POWER HOUR not displaced the NWA MAIN EVENT in entertainment value?....Can anybody explain to me why Dino Bravo continues to get a push?....It's too early to judge, but do you really like Barry Windham as THE WIDOWMAKER?....Whatever happened to Paul Jones?

If nothing else, Terry Funk has to be the Comeback Wrestler of the Year....I'm tired of seeing Jerry Lawler videos on CWF when there's little evidence of him defending his USWA belt in the circuit....Loser leave alliance matches ought to be outlawed because no group ever lives up to them....Whatever happened to Buddy Colt?

Fantasy match of the early 1990s: Andre vs. Zeus in an I CAN'T MOVE MATCH....Jack Brisco was, in my view, the premier wrestler of the '70s but Tim Woods always had more charisma....Watching Ivan Koloff wind up his career on a small indie circuit is sad....



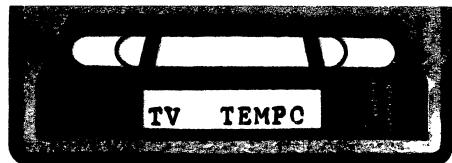
Does anyone but Dusty Rhodes remember that Ronnie Garvin was an NWA world champion?....Want a good diet? Try ULTRA SLIM FAST like Tommy Lasorda. I went from 197 to 175 in six weeks on it. Probably gain it all back on this English trip....Whatever happened to Enrique & Ramon Torres?

Anyone who says Randy Savage is "dead" in pro wrestling forgot Nixon became President....Why is Ted DiBiase forced into meaningless series with guys like Hillbilly Jim?....As much as I love 'em, somebody needs to pull back on the supercards. It's too hard to get excited over most of them now just from oversaturation....Whatever happened to Buzz Tyler?

Couldn't Bill Watts help SOME wrestling organization somewhere?....Has there ever been a more horrible program than THE BOBBY HEENAN SHOW?....Jim Cornette should be doing a 2-3 minute monologue on POWER HOUR with full audience reaction....Ray Traylor (Big Bubba Bossman) has to be the most consistent performing big guy in the business, Bam Bam Bigelow notwithstanding....My idea of nausea: watching Dusty dance to his AMERICAN DREAM theme music ....Whatever happened to Mark Lewin?

When is that long-awaited BEST OF RIC FLAIR video due out or is it a memory?....Contray to some views, I don't think that AWA "team" wrestling concept was a bad one. It won't work with Verne but some modifications might bring on THE innovative idea to strike fire with fans....Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson continue to amaze as a team. The Horsemen, I'm convinced, were dead but I'd have loved seeing them feud with a babyface Flair. ....Whatever happened to Dandy Jack Crawford?

I continue to marvel at Wade Keller as a bright young wrestling writer....People still chuckling over Bob Caudle saying, "Let's see some clothes come off!" at the BASH....Hope we'll be back in one piece next week. FSB.



(EDITOR'S NOTE: As we mentioned last week, because of our junket to England, we couldn't very well offer you all of the past week's TV results, so our TEMPO this week covers some alternative items I hope you find of interest in TV wrestling.)

**TV CLASSICS: THEY GOT IN THE RING, TOO**

Since television's inception, wrestling has provided occasional fodder for weekly series episodes. Not many on the following list will be in video stores but they are worth watching for on your favorite super-station or independent channel which offers evergreen reruns. One piece of advice: a couple of these will be distinctly hard to find unless you have a bona fide contact with one of the series' stars....

\*\*\***THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW:** "The Twizzle." First aired Feb. 28, 1962. Sally Rogers (Rose Marie) gets the whole gang to a local bowling alley to meet a hot young singer, who accidentally stumbled onto a new dance called "the twizzle," a mixture of twisting and bowling steps. At the end of the show, Sally introduces Freddie Blasie as "the world champeen wrestler." It seems Freddie has invented "the twazzle," a dance mixing twisting and rasslin'. A classic scene is when Freddie picks up Rob Petrie (Dick Van Dyke) in an airplane spin.

\*\*\***THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES:** "The Rass'-lin Clampetts" and "The Great Tag Team Match." Aired on consecutive weeks in 1968. Granny (Irene Ryan) gets mad after seeing a women's match on TV, goes to the local arena and challenges the Boston Strong Girl. After winning, the entire Clampett clan takes on the Strong Girl's family in a tag match the following week. Gene LaBell appears as the ref and Mike Mazurki appears as a wrestler. The promoter, Alan Reed, was the voice of Fred Flintstone.

\*\*\***YOU BET YOUR LIFE:** Haystacks Calhoun as a contestant. 'Stacks appeared in 1957. This was not one of the 130 shows included in the package CBN ran from 1983-88, so you may have to track it down from a local video store specializing in public domain material. Maybe Art Linkletter still has a kinescope of the HOUSE PARTY segment where Haystacks made his national debut.

\*\*\***MY FRIEND FLICKA:** One of the Disney Channel mainstays, this 1957 episode centers around a carnival coming to town and Ken

(Johnny Washbrook) has his faith in his father put to the test when he takes on a wrestler for a jackpot prize. I honestly don't remember who played the wrestler but series star Gene Evans did his own work and acquitted himself quite well.

\*\*\***THE MONKEES:** In a second-season episode, Nick Bockwinkel (who is not billed in the credits) has a one-line cameo as a truck driver and makes a cryptic reference to Ray Stevens. Catch it on the next cycle of runs from Nickelodeon.

\*\*\***THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM:** A 1962 episode finds Jack left out of plans for a celebrity charity event planned by five wives of Hollywood stars. Undaunted, Jack horns in and is appointed referee for a championship match in which Count Billy Varga defends his belt. After having problems with both guys, the scene closes with a dissolve to the hospital where Jack, perfectly healthy, sits between the two foes (both in traction), telling them, "I warned you what would happen if you didn't follow the rules. I'm sorry I had to do it." I never saw a JACK BENNY which wasn't funny and you'll enjoy this.

\*\*\***HOWDY DOODY:** Somebody may have to know Buffalo Bob Smith to see the kinescope of this. Aired December 31, 1949. Wrestlers Antonino Rocca and Primo Carnera appeared to promote an upcoming live card for NBC. During the show, the two guys try to teach Clarabell the Clown how to wrestle. Inadvertently, Rocca knocks Clarabell cold with a flying dropkick. The most unplanned angle ever for Clarabell (Bob Keeshan, later of Captain Kangaroo fame).

\*\*\***MATLOCK:** An episode of two seasons back which came as close to dramatically depicting the war between the major promotions today. Dick Butkus plays a masked grappler accused of murdering a promotion's star, who is being lured by a rival promoter and TV syndicator. Whodunit? Well, the guy's name wasn't Vince, Jim or Verne but the great Andy Griffith does manage to nail him. Exaggerated in spots, but not bad as far as its realism of the industry.

If you recall others dealing with wrestling among weekly series TV episodes, drop us a line. This can become a choice addition to a ring video collector's hobby.

TEN GREAT TV WRESTLING MEMORIES

While we're walking through castles and enjoying a change of summer temperature along the English countryside, let me share with you ten of my favorite memories of the pre-1984 era. All of them happened on TV. They aren't necessarily in rank order, nor do they all represent the best wrestling in the world. But they do symbolize classic moments which have made me love this genre every day:

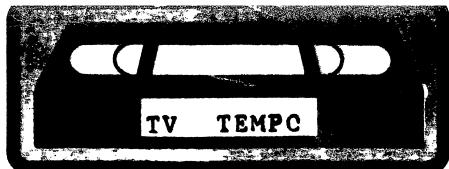
**DON CURTIS DRAWS JUICE FROM THE MISSOURI MAULER (1966):** The Mauler (Larry Hamilton) had initiated a new habit of not allowing his opponent to hit the ring. After sending two jobbers to stretcher jobs, Hamilton was blown away by an angry Don Curtis, who pierced the Mauler into a profuse juice job. This was a day when Gordon Solie still said a man was "cut wide open." The crimson mask coinage was still years away. My first look at blood.

**JOE SCARPA VS. GENE KINISKI (1967):** One of the greatest non-title TV matches involving a world champion I ever witnessed. This marked Scarpa's return to Florida after a 4-year absence and he battled Kiniski 18 minutes to a time duration draw but had his patented sleeper on at the bell. I always liked him better as Scarpa than as Strongbow.

**DICK MURDOCH & RENE GOULET ABANDON THE GREAT MALENKO (1971):** The turn I thought I'd never see. But a beautifully executed one. And it happened in a week Ed Capral was subbing for Solie on the Florida show. After first showing filmed footage of Malenko costing Murdoch and Goulet a Florida tag title match, the threesome was in the TV main event and six minutes into the contest, Dick & Rene walked out, leaving Malenko to be destroyed. I'll never forget Malenko's line: "Murdoch, Goulet, if it takes a LIFETIME, I'll get you for this!" Incidentally, the color commentator was Jim Crockett Sr.

**TOM RENESTO UNMASKS AS ASSASSIN I:** One of the major shockers ever. Renesto began a December 1972 Georgia show by telling Ed Capral he had taken his family around the world, wrestled every great team in wrestling and achieved a lifetime of goals. But it was time to adopt a new lifestyle. With no warning, the yellow mask comes off to the identity of Thomas Anthony Renesto and an end was marked to one of the great heel teams in wrestling history.

**TIM WOODS PINS DORY FUNK JR. (1972):** Tim,



and his soon to be celebrated masked partner Johnny Walker faced Dory Jr. and Dale Lewis in a tag match. Funk was seemingly unbeatable though on a constant collision course with Jack Brisco. But Woods, who always had the edge on Brisco in Georgia, locked Funk in his trademark 3/4 nelson and grapevine and I've never heard Solie count, "One, two, three," with any more enthusiasm.

**THE ANDERSON BROTHERS D. PAUL JONES & WAHOO McDANIEL (1975):** Jones & McDaniel, both serious singles stars at the time, had been given the NWA world tag belts to get them over with mid-Atlantic fans. But the TV rematch one month later was classic Ole & Gene as just as Wahoo was about to score the fall, Ole threw Wahoo into his own "brother" and the collision of heads brought Ole the fall and the belts back to the Andersons.

**TIM WOODS STOMPS BOBBY SHANE'S CROWN (1973):** After the Georgia split between Paul Jones' NWA promotion and Ann Gunkel as an independent, the NWA had a dramatic resurgence with some of the country's top stars. Shane returned as the first self-proclaimed King of Wrestling I ever remember. Woods had won the crown in an Atlanta "king" match but promised he would destroy the crown if Shane, who refused to wrestle on TV, didn't get in the ring. He didn't and Woods' foot did a number on the symbol of royalty. Tim came to the desk and told Solie, "All that's left of your king now is this bad cigar."

**DUSTY RHODES' TURN ON PAK SONG (1974):** With Bill Watts booking, the filmed highlights of the Tampa turn charted the course for one of the U.S.'s most popular babyfaces of the 1970s. The memorable moment came when Dusty & foe Mike Graham (teamed with his father vs. Rhodes & Pak) engaged in a dramatic post-match handshake. Still a classic.

**OLE ANDERSON SPLITS WITH STAN HANSEN (1977):** This was the first time out and I was in Fred Ward's Columbus Sports Arena for the live TV show that Saturday. After a bitter argument during their regular match, the split came at the desk and I'll not soon forget Jim Carlisle, the announcer, being bashed into the set when Ole & Stan went at it. A brutal turn.

**RODDY PIPER SAVES GORDON SOLIE FROM DON MURACO:** One of TV wrestling's great collectors' items which cemented Piper as one of the genre's major stars in the early 1980s.

**I REMEMBER:** Cowboy Bill Watts & Jack Brisco vs. Mr. Wrestling I & II

In this final installment on a classic Georgia storyline of 1973, Bill Watts had incensed his Oklahoma friend, Jack Brisco, by showing up in a Gold Cadillac Tournament match on Georgia Championship Wrestling as Dr. Scarlet, against Mr. Wrestling (Tim Woods). Doing so, in Brisco's eyes, made Watts the Ultimate Hypocrite after the Cowboy had so decried masked men.

But somehow, Watts persuaded Brisco in joining him in a tag match at the Atlanta City Auditorium against Mr. Wrestling I & II. Set only four weeks before Brisco won the NWA world title, the match received a heated buildup. Watts turned on the heat in some powerful heel interviews, which cemented his change to hardcore villain.

The following day on GCW, Brisco narrated the sordid highlights with Gordon Solie. After a combination of classic amateur moves and top-notch brawling, led by II, Watts tossed II out of the ring and began to go for a pair of knucks. Woods ducked a swing and went for his trademark sleeper but Watts slung I into the turnbuckle. At that point, Watts began going for the mask of Woods and Brisco ran into the ring to plead with Watts to stop. Watts refused. Brisco tried again and suddenly, his fellow Okie pushed him aside. On the third plea, Watts went berserk and used the knucks on Brisco. A recovering II rolled into the ring, cradled Watts for the pin and the men in white prevailed. But the story wasn't over.

Watts proceeded to kick the fallen future NWA champ and then climbed the top rope for a pounce with his size 14 cowboy boots. At this point, Woods & Walker dashed to the aid of Jack, pushing Watts into a quick retreat to the dressing room. As Brisco watched the Cowboy run, he angrily told viewers, "Now, here's the kind of courage Bill Watts has."

The angle set up a Watts-Brisco match the following week which Watts won under controversy. Yet, the two never met for the world

title in a Georgia ring. Next week: Eddie Graham & Sam Steamboat vs. El Lobo & Goliath.

**MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK**

**JEFF ZINGER**, 408 Dundas St., Woodstock ONT, Canada N4S 1B9, publishes the **MISSY HYATT FUN CLUB Magazine**. Lots of pictures and Missy trivia. Single copy by mail is \$3. Missy has authorized it.

**RICKY SHORT**, Rt. 2, Box 297, Gretna VA, is in the market for the following: ACW, SCW (when David Sammartino turned heel), and women's matches featuring Whitney Hansen, Jamie West and non-NWA Misty Blue Simmes matches.

**MARC ARONIN**, 825 Dahlia #807, Denver CO, is looking for tapes of the following teams: Jerry Woods & Jack Allen and the late '50s team of Seymour Koenig & Luis Martinez.

**JOEL GOODHEART**, offers memberships (\$19.95 single, \$33.95 family) in his **SQUARED CIRCLE FAN CLUB**, which includes a subscription to **PRO WRESTLING DIGEST**. Address: **SQUARED CIRCLE FAN CLUB**, P.O. BOX 57068, Philadelphia PA 19111.

**MICHAEL MATTESON**, 1305 N. Spring St., Lot 1, Gladwin MI, is hunting Calgary or Portland tapes to trade.

**GARY KAMENSACK**, 36474 Union Lake Rd., #103, Mt. Clemens MI 48043, is offering a huge selection of color pictures from early to mid '70s from Detroit. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the list and prices. And tell him **MATWATCH** sent you!

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